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Social Media Disengagement Among Gen Y and Gen Z: a Quantitative Investigation

ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to identify the relationship between Social media disengagement (SMD) and Social media experience (SME), perceived anonymity (PA), perceived credibility (PC) and subjective norms (SN), individual characteristics (IC) and to identify the most widely used social media network among Gen Y and Gen Z. A quantitative survey of 800 participants of Gen Y and Gen Z of Bangalore city were the respondents. A total of 532 responses were received, and the data were analyzed using SPSS. Results reveal that there is no correlation between SMD and SME, PC, PA and SN. However, the disengagement level varies across different social media networks like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The study suggests that degree of social media activity combined with digital literacy enhances social media usage among millennials, and with improved customer engagement in social media, marketers can harness it positively to improve their product offerings and customer base. Social Media Disengagement was first studied in the Indian context and less explored compared to engagement. During the pandemic GenY and GenZ shared and cared for in the online platform, resulting in a sense of belongingness. Hence, their disengagement from social media, generates opportunities for marketers to have better connectivity.

KEY WORDS

Credibility. Digital Natives. Social Media Disengagement. Social Media Experience. Subjective Norms.

1 Introduction

Social media is a new stream media and vast information shared across these platforms have made this a natural fit among advertisers to reach GenY and GenZ (Digital Natives). Social media, also called consumer-generated media, or Web2.0, refers to media that is created and driven by consumers.¹ Social Media has given a lot of space for digital natives to express themselves like #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, Awareness for Climate change, demanding eco-friendly products, and so on has completely revamped business models. A global survey (2019) from marketingcharts.com² has revealed that 60% of Gen Z and 72% of GenY agreed that social media is an essential part of their daily routine to get connected to all spheres of life. India has given a red-carpet welcome to internet penetration which reflects the growth in digital population (680 million Internet users) of the country. A survey (2021) from Statista.com³ stated that 28.4% of GenZ and 52.3% of GenY are the main contributors to social media usage in India. These people can be called social savvy as they spend at least 2.5 hrs per day engaging in social sites like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter and Snapchat.

This traffic provides an easy prediction of how they perceive and interact with products and services.⁴ This statistical evidence emphasizes that these generations are the prospective customers of the social media who amplify the purchasing power⁵ of this segment; hence, it becomes imperative for researchers and marketing organizations to understand them.

By predicting the phenomenal growth of social media usage by these segments and research by Duffet⁶ we focused on methods of engaging and setting co-creative experiences across different social media platforms for GenY and GenZ. At the same time these consumers can be easily disengaged from social media; many complex reasons. The dark side of social media disengagement may be temporary or permanent and can affect academics, business, politics and society.⁷ To overcome this, a holistic approach should be followed by the companies to build a strong trusting relationship with this generation. The process of disengagement and engagement with social media goes parallel for a consumer. Companies which focus on the engagement process, cannot afford to overlook the disengagement process, as it can slowly lead to a loss of consumers. Although customer engagement and disengagement are two separate concepts, they both exist within the same customer, product and service settings. This phenomenon of disengagement is considerably significant since it can lead to unreparable repercussions.

¹ See: KAPLAN, A. M., HAENLEIN, M.: Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. In *Business Horizons*, 2010, Vol. 53, No. 1, p. 59-68. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/1274371/Users_of_the_world_unite_The_challenges_and_opportunities_of_social_media>.

² LASHBROOK, J.: *Why Do Different Generations Use Social Media?*. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://www.marketingcharts.com/digital/social-media-110652>>.

³ KEELERY, S.: *Social Media Usage in India – Statistics & Facts*. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://www.statista.com/topics/5113/social-media-usage-in-india/>>.

⁴ See: THONG, J. Y. L. et al.: Consumer Acceptance of Personal Information and Communication Technology Services. In *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, 2011, Vol. 58, No. 4, p. 613-625. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/1497488/Consumer_Acceptance_of_Personal_Information_and_Communication_Technology_Services>.

⁵ See: AHMED, R. R., HANIF, M., MEENAI, Y. A.: Relationship Between Demographic and Internet Usage. In *Journal of Information Engineering and Applications*, 2015, Vol. 5, No. 10, p. 32-38. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283733993_Relationship_between_Demographic_and_Internet_Usage>.

⁶ See: DUFFET, R. G.: Influence of Social Media Marketing Communications on Young Consumers' Attitudes. In *Young Consumers*, 2017, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 19-39. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1108/yc-07-2016-00622>>.

⁷ See: YAMAMOTO, M., KUSHIN, M. J., DALISAY, F.: Social Media and Political Disengagement Among Young Adults: A Moderated Mediation Model of Cynicism, Efficacy, and Social Media Use on Apathy. In *Mass Communication and Society*, 2016, Vol. 20, No. 2, p. 149-168. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2016.1224352>>.

Hence a study on disengagement is considered more important and on account of this, an attempt is made to explore the factors Social Media Experience (SME), Perceived Anonymity (PA), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Credibility (PC)⁸ and individual characteristics which is an add-on to the variable list by the researchers that may or may not drive Social Media Disengagement (SMD). The next section discusses these variables followed by analysis, discussion and conclusions.

1.1 Literature Review

Social Media Disengagement

Disengagement is a complex construct found in a multidimensional state with a sum of various human domains⁹ associated with complex patterns involving behavioural, emotional and cognitive areas. Disengagement can arise for people in various aspects of life and is associated with terms such as disaffected, detached, indifferent, alienated, resentful, hostile and distrust.¹⁰

Disengagement is associated with a loss of meaningfulness, safety and non-availability¹¹ which leads to a reduction in interaction and an increase in interpersonal conflict as well as overt hostility, distrust and emotional distress.¹² Males are found to become disengaged when their association and linkage with Social-Media-Based Brand Communities (SMBBCs) decreases. Females on the other hand become disengaged with a brand when they lack a personal connection or customization. Young population naturally prefer artificial intelligence¹³ on social media and if there is a lack of usage of artificial intelligence by the website then this can lead to disengagement in younger generations. For instance, gamification has gained popularity among young customers and research shows that it increases brand engagement.¹⁴

Social media disengagement in youngsters could be a result of psychological factors such as emotional health, psychological distress, low motivation, inter alia and pressure from parents and peers.¹⁵ Rapid physical and emotional changes in the teenage phase are the same

⁸ See: NGUYEN, L. T. V. et al.: Drivers of Social Media Disengagement: A Study of Young Consumers In Vietnam. In *Young Consumers*, 2019, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 155-170. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336357070_Drivers_of_social_media_disengagement_a_study_of_young_consumers_in_Vietnam>.

⁹ CHIPCHASE, L. et al.: Conceptualising and Measuring Student Disengagement in Higher Education: A Synthesis of the Literature. In *International Journal of Higher Education*, 2017, Vol. 6, No. 2, p. 31. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n2p31>>.

¹⁰ *Student Engagement Literature Review*. [online]. [2022-04-12]. Available at: <https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/hea/private/studentengagementliteraturereview_1_1568037028.pdf>.

¹¹ See: KAHN, W. A.: Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. In *Academy of Management Journal*, 2017, Vol. 33, No. 4, p. 692-724. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://journals.aom.org/doi/10.5465/256287>>.

¹² See: FITZPATRICK, M. A.: Between Husbands & Wives: Communication in Marriage. In *Choice Reviews Online*, 1989, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 31-227. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232440676_Between_Husbands_Wives_Communication_in_Marriage_Sage_series_in_interpersonal_communication_Vol_7>.

¹³ See: HASSE, A. et al.: Youth and Artificial Intelligence: Where We Stand. In *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2019, p. 1-21. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3385718>>.

¹⁴ See: XI, N., HAMARI, J.: Does Gamification Affect Brand Engagement and Equity? A Study in Online Brand Communities. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2020, Vol. 109, p. 449-460. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.058>>.

¹⁵ BAIK, C., NAYLOR, R., ARKOUUDIS, S.: *The First Year Experience in Australian Universities: Findings From Two Decades, 1994-2014*. Australia : Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education. The University of Melbourne, 2015. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/1513123/FYE-2014-FULL-report-FINAL-web.pdf>.

across the globe. It often starts with an increase in the number of activities in one's life¹⁶ results in spending less time on social media. Social media disengagement associated with a brand is based on few important factors namely affection with the brand and brand-use intention.¹⁷

When a brand fails to cherish and maintain a relationship with the user, this may lead to disengagement in social media. The user feels that the content shared by the social media is no longer useful, or the user's interest changes and a disconnection with the community leads to disengagement; unpleasant technical environments or hostile community environments also contribute toward disengagement from social media.

Customer engagement can occur when high engagement¹⁸ exists both with brand¹⁹ and advertising²⁰ and a lack of these factors leads to disengagement which is signified by certain actions, such as removal of the brand page from the feed, overlooking the available information related to the brand and discontinuation in following the page of a particular brand.

Social Media Experience

The advent of social media has facilitated a new world of virtual engagement through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat to individuals. More than 80% of the day is spent on social media to connect and communicate, which might either solicit social networking or social dysfunction.

However, the positive or negative effects of social media depend solely on the user.²¹ In this context²² we explored individuals motivating factors towards virtual environments such as subjective wellbeing and psychological needs. The authors considered Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) to the social media experience of participants regarding positive, negative and overall affect balance that provides virtual happiness. They stated that virtual experience depends on the generation they belong to. A study conducted by²³ revealed that blogs, Instagram and LinkedIn positively predicted social comparison. Nevertheless, the author mentioned that overall happiness and life satisfaction are not affected by social comparison, it is also vital to understand the features of social media

¹⁶ HILLMAN, K., MARK, G.: *Becoming an Adult: Leaving Home, Relationships and Home Ownership Among Australian Youth*. Australia : LSAY Research Reports, 2002. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/34533036/Becoming_an_adult_Leaving_home_relationships_and_home_ownership_among_Australian_youth>.

¹⁷ See: DUTOT, V., MOSCONI, E.: Understanding Factors of Disengagement Within a Virtual Community: An Exploratory Study. In *Journal of Decision Systems*, 2016, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 227-243. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304067260_Understanding_factors_of_disengagement_within_a_virtual_community_an_exploratory_study>.

¹⁸ See: BRODIE, R. J. et al.: Customer Engagement: Conceptual Domain, Fundamental Propositions, and Implications for Research. In *Journal of Service Research*, 2011, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 252-271. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285726483_Customer_engagement_Conceptual_domain_fundamental_propositions_and_implications_for_research>.

¹⁹ See: HOLLEBEEK, D. L.: Exploring Customer Brand Engagement: Definition and Themes. In *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 2011, Vol. 19, No. 7, p. 1-30. [online]. [2022-04-12]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232906763_Exploring_customer_brand_engagement_Definition_and_themes>.

²⁰ See: PHILLIPS, B. J., MCQUARRIE, E. F.: Narrative and Persuasion in Fashion Advertising. In *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3, p. 368-392. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1086/653087>>.

²¹ See: GRACIYAL, D. G., VISWAM, D.: Social Media and Emotional Well-being: Pursuit of Happiness or Pleasure. In *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 2021, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 99-115. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365x211003737>>.

²² See: BEREZAN, O. et al.: The Pursuit of Virtual Happiness: Exploring the Social Media Experience Across Generations. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2018, Vol. 89, p. 455-461. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://anjala.faculty.unlv.edu/Berezan_JBR_2018.pdf>.

²³ See: CHAE, J.: Re-Examining the Relationship Between Social Media and Happiness: The Effects of Various Social Media Platforms on Reconceptualized Happiness. In *Telematics and Informatics*, 2018, Vol. 35, No. 6, p. 1656-1664. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324689243_Reexamining_the_Relationship_between_Social_Media_and_Happiness_The_Effects_of_Various_Social_Media_Platforms_on_Reconceptualized_Happiness>.

pages or content that attracts and provides a better experience. Perez-Vega et al.²⁴ explored the Fan Page Cues (FPCs) using three dimensions' social interactive value, visual appearance and identity attractiveness.

It was suggested that elements representing attractiveness namely large images, images of celebrities, little text and a search feature²⁵ should be considered when developing a digital interaction tool. Mastrodicasa and Metellus²⁶ explored the impact of social media on college students and found that social media is not a problem. However, the specific use and focus on social media activities of college students make a lot of difference in the outcome as well as the experience.

Social media experience is based on results that a user gets while exploring the sites or pages. Positive experience during access and usage of various sites makes the user stay connected; the main reason for youngsters to connect with social media is to have an update on the economy, industry and the environment. Social media sites might have better engagement and experience when they are updated²⁷ with accurate information.²⁸ Instagram sites consider three dimensions; objectification, sexualisation and misrepresentation of female counterparts who are college students. Most of the posts were by college students, especially female students indicating women empowerment²⁹ Abedin and Jafarzadeh³⁰ mentioned that many young people are active on Facebook due to its appealing content, navigation options and the coverage of socializing aspects, yet another feature in social media experience is based on the navigation mechanism adopted in various social networking platforms.³¹

Internet users' experiences of cyber-hate were explored by Celik³² with respect to ethnicity, religion, sexual preference, and gender-based political perspective and found that gender, income and socio-political aspects significantly contribute to cyber-hate. Twenge³³ investigated online social media leading to social connection or social disconnection among the millennial,

²⁴ See: PEREZ-VEGA, R. et al.: On Being Attractive, Social And Visually Appealing in Social Media: The Effects Of Anthropomorphic Tourism Brands on Facebook Fan Pages. In *Tourism Management*, 2018, Vol. 66, p. 339-347. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.11.013>>.

²⁵ See: DJAMASBI, S., SIEGEL, M., TULLIS, T.: "Generation Y, Web Design, and Eye Tracking". In *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 2010, Vol. 68, No. 5, p. 307-323. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220108757_Generation_Y_web_design_and_eye_tracking>.

²⁶ See: MASTRODICASA, J., METELLUS, P.: The Impact of social media on College Students. In *Journal of College and Character*, 2013, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 21-30. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270550330_The_Impact_of_Social_Media_on_College_Students>.

²⁷ See: VOORVELD, H. A. M. et al.: Engagement With Social Media and Social Media Advertising: The Differentiating Role of Platform Type. In *Journal of Advertising*, 2018, Vol. 47, No. 1, p. 38-54. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754>>.

²⁸ See: KHAN, F.R. et al.: "Impact of Social Media on Customers Satisfaction: Bank Muscat – A Case Study. In *Ahead International Journal of Recent Research Review*, 2017, Vol. 1, No. 11, p. 154-163. [online]. [2022-04-12]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/33076681/IMPACT_OF_SOCIAL_MEDIA_ON_CUSTOMERS_SATISFACTION_BANK_MUSCAT_A_CASE_STUDY>.

²⁹ See: DAVIS, S. E.: Objectification, Sexualization, and Misrepresentation: Social Media and the College Experience. In *Social Media + Society*, 2018, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 1-9. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118786727>>.

³⁰ See: ABEDIN, B.: Relationship Development with Customers on Facebook: A Critical Success Factors Model. In ABEDIN, B., JAFARZADEH, H. (eds.): *Proceedings of 48th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Hawaii : IEEE Computer Society, 2015, p. 1889-1898. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/38437025/Relationship_Development_with_Customers_on_Facebook_A_Critical_Success_Factors_Model>.

³¹ See: NIZAM, N.: Link Sharing on Twitter During Popular Events: Implications for Social Navigation on Websites. In NIZAM, N., WATTERS, C., GRUZD, A. (eds.): *Proceedings of the Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. Hawaii : IEEE Computer Society, 2014, p. 1745-1754. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: < DOI:10.1109/HICSS.2014.222>.

³² See: CELIK, S.: Experiences of Internet Users Regarding Cyberhate. In *Information Technology & People*, 2019, Vol. 32, No. 6, p. 1446-1471. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1108/itp-01-2018-0009>>.

³³ See: TWENGE, J. M.: Does Online Social Media Lead to Social Connection or Social Disconnection? In *Journal of College and Character*, 2013, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 11-20. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1515/jcc-2013-0003>>.

and the results showed that because of the popularity of social media, there is a decline in empathy, civic engagement and political involvement. Based on the reviews presented in this section this study explores the relationship between the social media experience of ZenY and ZenZ and their disengagement with social media.

Perceived Credibility (PC)

Modern technological capabilities and the rise of social media have prompted concerns for the credibility of information on social media pages; as a result, new responsibilities have been placed on social media and its users.³⁴ There are worldwide instances in which social media is seen as a source of information. For example, social media has been the go-to destination for seeking information on the spread of Covid-19 across countries, vaccination information etc. Mass media has historically been a source of information³⁵ because consumers always associate them with credibility, worthiness and time sensitivity. However, it is imperative to learn more about how consumers evaluate the information they process from social media websites.³⁶

Credibility, often known as believability, is a quality possessed by individuals, who are not always able to recognize genuine information from fakes through their cognitive ability.³⁷

Information credibility is the extent to which an individual perceives information to be believable.³⁸ When consumers perceive information that is of high quality, they may give importance to it if it remains useful for them.³⁹ Perceived credibility is often considered a strong predictor of consumer's further action based on the information they receive. Perceived credibility in social media websites can be attributed to three factors: medium, message and source credibility.⁴⁰ The longer the message length of retweets and replies in social media websites, the higher the perceived credibility.⁴¹ The recency of updating content on social media websites has a positive linear relationship with perceived source credibility which means that faster updates lead to increased source credibility.⁴²

³⁴ See: METZGER, M. J. et al.: Credibility for the 21st Century: Integrating Perspectives on Source, Message, and Media Credibility in the Contemporary Media Environment. In *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 2003, Vol. 27, No. 1, p. 293-335. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.academia.edu/850675/Credibility_for_the_21st_century_Integrating_perspectives_on_source_message_and_media_credibility_in_the_contemporary_media_environment>.

³⁵ See: MURCH, A. W.: Public Concern for Environmental Pollution. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1971, Vol. 35, No. 1, p. 100-106. [online]. [2022-04-12]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1086/267870>>.

³⁶ See: WESTERMAN, D., SPENCE, P. R., VAN DER HEIDE, B.: Social Media as Information Source: Recency of Updates and Credibility of Information. In *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2014, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 171-183. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12041>>.

³⁷ VIVIANI, M., PASI, G.: Credibility in Social Media: Opinions, News, and Health Information-A Survey. In *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery*, 2017, Vol. 7, No. 5, p. 1209. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1002/widm.1209>>.

³⁸ See: MCKNIGHT, D. H.: Factors and Effects of Information Credibility. In MCKNIGHT, D. H., KACMAR, C. J. (eds.): *ICEC '07: Proceedings of the ninth international conference on Electronic commerce*. Minneapolis MN USA : Association for Computing Machinery, p. 423-432. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/221550596_Factors_and_effects_of_information_credibility>.

³⁹ See: AHN, T., RYU, S., HAN, I.: The Impact of Web Quality and Playfulness on User Acceptance of Online Retailing. In *Information & Management*, 2007, Vol. 44, No. 3, p. 263-275. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2006.12.008>>.

⁴⁰ See: LI, R., SUH, A.: Factors Influencing Information Credibility on Social Media Platforms: Evidence from Facebook Pages. In *Procedia Computer Science*, 2015, Vol. 72, p. 314-328. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2015.12.146>>.

⁴¹ See: MITRA, T., GRAHAM, W. P., GILBERT, E.: A Parsimonious Language Model of Social Media Credibility Across Disparate Events. In MITRA, T., GRAHAM, W. P., GILBERT, E. (eds.): *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing*. Portland : Association for Computing Machinery, 2017, p. 126-145. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1145/2998181.2998351>>.

⁴² See: WESTERMAN, D., SPENCE, P. R., VAN DER HEIDE, B.: Social Media as Information Source: Recency of Updates and Credibility of Information. In *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 2014, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 171-183. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12041>>.

Credibility also depends on the person who is administering the social media page, their regular interactions with the followers and the page activity frequency, and various heuristics of social media websites namely modality, navigability, interactivity, and agency, have a profound influence on the youth's assessment of credibility.⁴³ Age and gender are the dominant tools in shaping perceived credibility in social media. In the mainstream media, older male newscasters were more credible than their younger counterparts.

In contrast, young male social media influencers are more credible on social media websites. In terms of source credibility, male newscasters were more credible, and in terms of the message, the news read by female newscasters was credible.⁴⁴ With respect to social media websites, the attitude of males and females to social media content has different effects on credibility and information quality.⁴⁵ The growing trend of social media sites pictures that the credibility of the page is imperative for users' engagement. Accordingly, this study attempts to determine whether perceived credibility has a direct impact on social media disengagement.

Perceived Anonymity

Social media anonymity allows users to freely express their ideas and thoughts which is not possible in mainstream media. Anonymity also provides users with equitable ground without any judgment to make their contributions.⁴⁶ In general, anonymous users on social media are much more supportive and helpful in their suggestions and feedback when sensitive disclosures are made. Forums in different social media platforms act as safe spaces to talk about difficult experiences and connect with people who have undergone the same.⁴⁷ However, with the increase in online usage across the world, anonymity has been identified with both positive and negative behaviours in social media discussions. Social media platforms like Reddit, Facebook and Quora can compromise anonymity based on their privacy policies.⁴⁸ This has warned the anonymous users to some extent to be careful about cyberbullying, trolling and other inappropriate behaviours. 'Throwaway accounts' are being used by young Reddit users which allows them to engage temporarily without disclosing one's identity.⁴⁹

⁴³ See: SUNDAR, S. S.: *The MAIN Model: A Heuristic Approach to Understanding Technology Effects on Credibility*. Cambridge, MA : MacArthur Foundation Digital Media and Learning Initiative, 2008, p. 73-100. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323990996_The_MAIN_Model_A_Heuristic_Approach_to_Understanding_Technology_Effects_on_Credibility>.

⁴⁴ See: WEIBEL, D., WISSMATH, B., GRONER, R.: How Gender and Age Affect Newscasters' Credibility – An Investigation in Switzerland. In *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 2018, Vol. 52, No. 3, p. 466-484. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/08838150802205801>>.

⁴⁵ See: DEDEOGLU, B. B.: Are Information Quality and Source Credibility Really Important for Shared Content On Social Media? In *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 2019, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 513-534. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330024207_Are_information_quality_and_source_credibility_really_important_for_shared_content_on_social_media_The_moderating_role_of_gender>.

⁴⁶ See: SCHLESINGER, A.: Situated Anonymity: Impacts of Anonymity, Ephemerality, and Hyper-Locality on Social Media. In SCHLESINGER, A. et al. (eds.): *CHI '17: Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. Denver Colorado USA : Association for Computing Machinery, 2017, p. 6912-6924. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://dl.acm.org/doi/pdf/10.1145/3025453.3025682>>.

⁴⁷ See: ANDALIBI, N. et al.: Social Support, Reciprocity, and Anonymity in Responses to Sexual Abuse Disclosures on Social Media. In *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction*, 2018, Vol. 25, No. 5, p. 1-35. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328010910_Social_Support_Reciprocity_and_Anonymity_in_Responses_to_Sexual_Abuse_Disclosures_on_Social_Media>.

⁴⁸ See: KILGO, D. K. et al.: Reddit's Veil of Anonymity: Predictors of Engagement and Participation in Media Environments with Hostile Reputations. In *Social Media + Society*, 2018, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 1-9. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118810216>>.

⁴⁹ See: LAMPINEN, A.: Self-declared Throwaway Accounts on Reddit. In LAMPINEN, A., GERGLE, D., SHAMMA, D. A. (eds.): *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, New York USA : Association for Computing Machinery, 2019, p. 1-30. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1145/3359237>>.

Women are increasingly adopting more temporary identities in social networks than men.⁵⁰ Young mothers use anonymity to research alternative perspectives on motherhood. Older adults have negative attitudes towards social media use mainly because of the lack of code for social conduct and anonymity in online forums.⁵¹ Social media users are also worried about the fact that the information they share on these platforms is not safe and could lead to data theft, identity theft, hacking, and other security-related issues. This is one of the reasons for social media users to give very little information about themselves and their interests in these platforms and recent awareness of cybersecurity has also led users to check for security certificates on the social media pages and 'lock' their profile for strangers. The security of social media pages is crucial for its credibility and possible threats and privacy risks in social network sites could lead to less credibility on social media pages. In this context, this study tries to determine whether perceived anonymity has a direct impact on social media disengagement.

Subjective Norms

Subjective norm is the perceived social pressure to exhibit a particular behaviour. It stems from various beliefs, people's opinions, peer pressure and peer approval. It also refers to rules and regulations set predefined by a society on how to behave in a natural setting in a certain manner and emphasizes one's motivation to comply with society's view. People often change their behaviour to 'fit-in' with their peer groups. This behaviour is common among all age groups where everyone puts on their best performance when they are with their 'like-minded' groups and deliberate on trivial issues. The path from subjective norm to behaviour intention is stronger among older people than younger. Subjective norms affect the purchase intention of youngsters on social media platforms.⁵²

Educational background is associated with personal attitudes and can have a positive or negative impact on subjective norms.⁵³ In a cultural context, individuals from collectivistic cultures experience stronger peer pressure and are more willing to follow other's opinions. In the case of people from individualistic countries, strong attitudes towards certain behaviours are exhibited and they may not adhere to others opinions.⁵⁴ Social pressures on a certain social media page may increase or decrease the credibility of a page, leading to social media engagement or disengagement.

⁵⁰ See: LEAVITT, A.: "This is a Throwaway Account." In LEAVITT, A. (ed.): *CSCW '15: Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing*. Vancouver BC Canada : Association for Computing Machinery, 2015, p. 315-327. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1145/2675133.2675175>>.

⁵¹ See: LEIST, A. K.: Social Media Use of Older Adults: A Mini-Review. In *Gerontology*, 2013, Vol. 59, No. 4, p. 378-384. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1159/000346818>>.

⁵² See: RACHMAWATI, I. K. et al.: Collaboration Technology Acceptance Model, Subjective Norms and Personal Innovations on Buying Interest Online. In *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 10, p. 1-8. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346096054_Collaboration_Technology_Acceptance_Model_Subjective_Norms_and_Personal_Innovations_on_Buying_Interest_Online>.

⁵³ See: JEGER, M., IVKOVIC, A. F.: The Role of Subjective Norms in Forming the Intention to Purchase Green Food. In *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 2015, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 738-748. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677x.2015.1083875>>.

⁵⁴ See: HAM, M., JEGER, M., IVKOVIC, A. F.: The Role of Subjective Norms in Forming the Intention to Purchase Green Food. In *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 2015, Vol. 28, No. 1, p. 738-748. [online]. [2015-10-09]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2015.1083875>>.

2 Methodology

Research Design

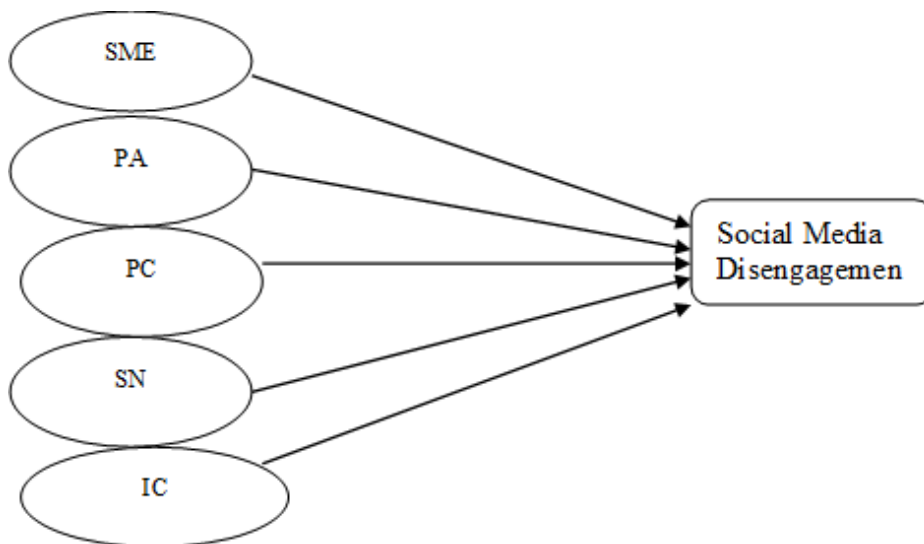
The present study employed a quantitative survey to address the research question, as there exists a relationship between SMD and PA, PC, SN and to identify widely used social networking sites among GenY and Z. The study employed a snowball sampling technique based on the usage of social media for at least three hours a day.⁵⁵ Researchers administered a tool booklet consisting of a few demographic details and items pertaining to social media disengagement (SMD), perceived anonymity (PA), social media experiences (SME), perceived credibility (PC), and subjective norms (SN). All instruments were rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree (SDA) to strongly agree (SA). Demographic details (individual characteristics) considered for the study were gender, family type, and widely used social media like Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Sample and Data Collection

The study selected its sample from Bangalore, India. Bangalore is the silicon city of India as it is a leading information technology hub. The city hosts many educated families and hence the use of social media is high among the public. The study sent out a survey of 800 participants and obtained 532 responses. Among them 278 were male and 254 were female ranging in age from 18 to 35 years.

Analysing of Data

The present study employs a quantitative design to understand the relationship between SMD and SME, PA, SN, and PC. The study found differences in SMD among demographic variables such as gender, family type, and widely used social media. Figure 1 presents a schematic of the study design.



PICTURE 1: Design of the study

Source: own processing, 2021.

⁵⁵ See: DUTOT, V., MOSCONI, E.: Understanding Factors of Disengagement Within a Virtual Community: An Exploratory Study. In *Journal of Decision Systems*, 2016, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 227-243. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304067260_Understanding_factors_of_disengagement_within_a_virtual_community_an_exploratory_study>.

Hypotheses of the study

The present study framed the following null hypothesis to test the research questions.

- There is no significant relationship between Perceived anonymity and social media disengagement.
- There is no significant relationship between social media experiences and social media disengagement.
- There is no significant relationship between Perceived Credibility and Social media disengagement.
- There is no significant relationship between Subjective Norms and Social Media disengagement.
- There is no significant difference between social media disengagement among demographic variables gender, and family type.
- There is no main or interaction effect between social media disengagement and the widely used social media.

Tools used for the study

1. Social media disengagement (SMD) adapted from Dutot and Mosconi⁵⁶
2. Perceived anonymity (PA) by Hite et al.⁵⁷
3. Social Media Experiences (SME) by Morgan-Thomas and Veloutsou⁵⁸
4. Perceived credibility (PC) adapted from Forbes⁵⁹
5. Subjective norms (SN) adapted from Sanne and Wiese⁶⁰
6. Demographic Pro-forma (Individual Characteristics) constructed by researchers

Individual characteristics/ Demographic details

- Gender (Male & Female)
- Family type (Joint & Nuclear)
- Most widely used social media (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter)

Social Media Disengagement scale

- The content shared by members does not interest me.
- My needs or interests have changed.
- The benefits I get from the community (expertise, exchange) are no longer clear to me.
- My surroundings are no longer involved in the community.
- I cannot get attention from the community.
- The community is not friendly.
- The technical platform (design) no longer pleases me.

⁵⁶ See: DUTOT, V., MOSCONI, E.: Understanding Factors of Disengagement Within a Virtual Community: An Exploratory Study. In *Journal of Decision Systems*, 2016, Vol. 25, No. 3, p. 227-243. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304067260_Understanding_factors_of_disengagement_within_a_virtual_community_an_exploratory_study>.

⁵⁷ See: HITE, D. M., VOELKER, T., ROBERTSON, A.: Measuring Perceived Anonymity: The Development of a Context Independent Instrument. In *Journal of Methods and Measurement in the Social Sciences*, 2014, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 22-39. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://journals.librarypublishing.arizona.edu/jmms/article/809/gallery/804/view/>>.

⁵⁸ See: THOMAS, A. M., VELOUTSOU, C.: Beyond Technology Acceptance: Brand Relationships and Online Brand Experience. In *Journal of Business Research*, 2011, Vol. 66, No. 1, p. 21-27. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/251511471_Beyond_technology_acceptance_Brand_relationships_and_online_brand_experience>.

⁵⁹ See: FORBES, J. E.: *Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Credibility, Engagement, Interactivity and Brand Metrics of Social Network Sites*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Baton Rouge, LA : Louisiana State University, 2010, p. 2-71. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2512&context=gradschool_theses>.

⁶⁰ See: SANNE, P. N. C., WIESE, M.: The Theory of Planned Behaviour and User Engagement Applied to Facebook Advertising. In *SA Journal of Information Management*, 2018, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 1-10. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325452848_The_theory_of_planned_behaviour_and_user_engagement_applied_to_Facebook_advertising>.

Perceived Anonymity scale

- It is difficult for others to identify me as an individual
- I am confident that others do not know who I am
- I believe that my personal identity remains unknown to others
- I am easily identified as an individual by others (reverse coded)
- Others are likely to know who I am (reverse coded)
- My personal identity is known by others (reverse coded)

Social Media Experiences

- The web page layout is appealing.
- It is easy to navigate
- Results are always returned promptly
- The results are always up to date
- Accurate search results are always returned

Perceived Credibility scale

- Social media is dependable
- Social media is honest
- Social media is reliable
- Social media is sincere
- Social media is trustworthy
- The information in social media is produced by experts
- The information in social media is produced by experienced people
- The information in social media is produced by knowledgeable people
- The information in social media is produced by qualified people
- The information in social media is produced by skilled people

Subjective Norms

- People who are important to me think I should be active user on SM
- People who influence my behaviour think I should be more participative in SM
- Others I know expect that people like me should be on SM

TABLE 1: *Showing the items of all the instruments used in the study*

Source: own processing, 2022.

3 Results

Validity and reliability of the instruments

Researchers have established the content and face validity of all instruments with the help of a panel of subject experts. Researchers diligently incorporated the suggestions provided by the experts and thoroughly checked all the adapted items of the instruments. A pilot study was conducted to re-establish the reliability of all the instruments to a small representative sample. Table 2 presents the reliability results of all instruments used in the study.

Instruments	Perceived Anonymity	Social media Experiences	Perceived Credibility	Subjective Norms	Social media disengagement
Cronbach's Alpha value	0.792	0.721	0.714	0.757	0.752

TABLE 2: *Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics*

Source: own processing, 2022.

From Table 2 all the instruments have shown a high reliability ($r > 0.7$) coefficient value; therefore, the instruments are highly reliable.⁶¹

⁶¹ See: NUNNALLY, J. C.: *Psychometric Theory 3E*. India: Tata McGraw-Hill Education, 1994.

Statistical Analysis

The study conducted the following statistical tests to test the hypotheses framed. Correlation test, independent sample t-test, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Correlation tests help in understanding the relationship between the variables SMD and PA, SME, PC, and SN. As researchers are interested in understanding the difference in SMD between the groups of categorical demographic variables, the study employed an independent sample t-test and ANOVA.

Correlation Statistics

A correlation test was conducted to understand the relationship between social media disengagement and independent variables, perceived anonymity, social media experience, perceived credibility, and subjective norms. Table III presents the results of the correlation tests.

Variables	Perceived Anonymity	Social media Experiences	Perceived Credibility	Subjective Norms	Subjective Norms
Social media Disengagement	0.033**	0.011**	-0.067**	0.040**	0.040**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

TABLE 3: Pearson Correlation Statistics

Source: own processing, 2022.

From Table 3 it is noted that a negative correlation was also observed between social media disengagement and perceived credibility ($r=-0.067$). Social media disengagement was not correlated with perceived anonymity ($r=0.03$), social media experience($r=0.01$), and subjective norms ($r=0.04$).

Independent Sample t-tests

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether social media disengagement differs between gender and family type. Tables IV and V present the results of an independent sample t-test.

		Levene's Test Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Difference	95% CI Difference
									Lower	Upper
Social Media Disengagement	Equal variances assumed	.178	.673	.393	525	.694	.174	.441	-.693	1.040
	Equal variances not assumed			.393	519.825	.694	.174	.441	-.693	1.040

TABLE 4: Independent Sample t-test between social media disengagement

Source: own processing, 2022.

As shown in Table 4, there was no significant difference in social media disengagement between male and female participants ($t = 0.393$, $p = 0.694$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI Difference	95% CI Difference
									Lower	Upper
Social Media Disengagement	Equal variances assumed	.114	.736	-.134	527	.893	-.071	.531	-1.114	0.971
	Equal variances not assumed			-.132	179.368	.895	-.071	.542	-1.141	0.998

TABLE 5: Independent Sample t-test between social media disengagement and family type

Source: own processing, 2022.

As shown in Table 5, there was no significant difference in social media disengagement among participants from nuclear and joint family ($t=0.134$, $p=0.893$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

ANOVA

The study conducted ANOVA tests to understand whether social media disengagement differed between participants with various social media pages such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Table 6 and 7 presents the results of the ANOVA.

Social Media Disengagement					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	308.960	3	102.987	4.115	.007
Within Groups	13139.947	525	25.028		
Total	13448.907	528			

TABLE 6: Showing results of ANOVA

Source: own processing, 2022.

From Table 6, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean values of social media disengagement among various social media pages such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. The significance value was found to be 0.007 ($p < 0.05$); therefore, there was a significant main effect between SMD and widely used social media pages. A Tukey post hoc test was conducted to understand the interaction effect among the widely used social media pages.

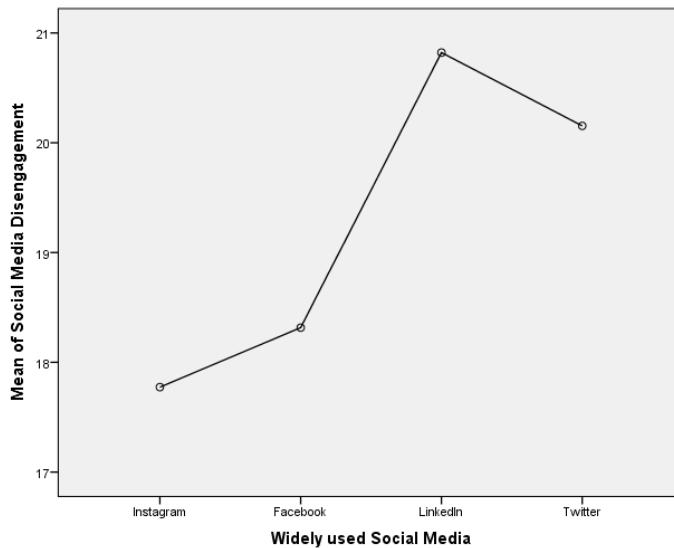
Multiple Comparisons: Dependent Variable: Social Media Disengagement						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Widely used social media	(J) Widely used social media	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Upper Bound	Upper Bound
Instagram	Facebook	-.542	1.171	.967	-3.56	2.48
	LinkedIn	-3.047 [*]	.973	.010	-5.56 [*]	-.54
	Twitter	-2.380	1.407	.329	-6.01	1.25
Facebook	Instagram	.542	1.171	.967	-2.48	3.56
	LinkedIn	-2.506	1.487	.333	-6.34	1.33
	Twitter	-1.838	1.801	.737	-6.48	2.80

LinkedIn	Instagram	3.047 [*]	.973	.010	.54 [*]	5.56
	Facebook	2.506	1.487	.333	-1.33	6.34
	Twitter	.668	1.679	.979	-3.66	4.99
Twitter	Instagram	2.380	1.407	.329	-1.25	6.01
	Facebook	1.838	1.801	.737	-2.80	6.48
	LinkedIn	-.668	1.679	.979	-4.99	3.66

TABLE 7: Showing results of Post Hoc Tests

Source: own processing, 2022.

The multiple comparison results above clearly show the interaction effect between various widely used social media pages on social media disengagement. An interaction effect was found between Instagram and LinkedIn with a significant value of 0.010 ($p < 0.05$). It is also evident from Picture 2 showing the mean plot. Participants disengaged from the LinkedIn social media page more than Instagram and they did not differ in their disengagement between Instagram, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



PICTURE 2: Showing the ANOVA means plot

Source: own processing, 2021.

4 Discussion

Social media disengagement has not been explored much in the Indian context and this study is an attempt at the same. The variables from the study by Nguyen et al.⁶² were adopted and analysed for Gen Y and Gen Z. In general, digital disengagement might be a concern for over monitoring by technology in all means of life either through smartphones or wearables. From our literature we can state that social media disengagement is the process by which consumers detach from social networking sites. This study provides the following findings.

⁶² See: NGUYEN, L. T. V. et al.: Drivers of Social Media Disengagement: A Study of Young Consumers in Vietnam. In *Young Consumers*, 2020, Vol. 21 No. 2, p. 155-170. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336357070_Drivers_of_social_media_disengagement_a_study_of_young_consumers_in_Vietnam>.

First, the results show that there is no correlation between dependent (social media disengagement) and independent variables (perceived anonymity, social media experience, perceived credibility and subjective norms). Social media disengagement from any social networking site may arise when consumers face a situation of trolling, cyber bullying or when they feel that their identity is revealed, leading to a lack of trust factor, and hence perceived anonymity is at high risk. Technology-based user misbehaviour explored Young⁶³ and cyber bullying, privacy concerns, exhibitionism and voyeurism investigated by Kefi and Perez⁶⁴ provide evidence for the difficult situation faced by online users. However, a report from Indiafacts.in⁶⁵ says that the major (80%) youth population of India post feeds that could be considered as private, which may reveal their identity. This supports our finding that the present generation wants to have more exposure to social media by managing and neglecting the negative aspects of media.

The consumers of GenZ and GenY feel more accepted in social media than in real life.⁶⁶ Because of digital ignorance, these generation consumers may feel that the online risks do not apply to them and might assume they are not old enough to think about their identity being stolen. Another reason for disengagement from social media might be that 57% (India stats. in) of youth in India do not know how to react or respond when they are cyberbullied. A study in 2020 by the Youth Online Learning Organization (YOLO)⁶⁷ and Social Media Matters (SMM), stated that 52% of Indian consumers are ready to sell their data if it is paid, which might also be a reason for the youth to engage themselves as financially independent. In the same study 62% of the younger generation have high hopes that social media can bring positive change which may attract them all time being engaged. India being engulfed by COVID19, has significantly increased the dependency on social media⁶⁸ and Priya Chetty⁶⁹ has stated that social media consumption has increased to 70% in the first five months of the pandemic. Social media is also used for social benefit during pandemics where GenZ and GenY used it mostly to bridge the gap between needy and helpers. This provides strong evidence for why these generation consumers are not disengaged in 2021. Ever since the pandemic hit, the usage of social media has elevated, forcing youngsters to be cooped up at home, having nowhere to go and nothing much to do. This has increased the habit of switching between multiple apps and scrolling through feeds, also called "Mindless Scrolling". The engagement of social media among Gen Y and Z is at an all-time high which results in the endless spiral of social media scrolling.⁷⁰

⁶³ See: YOUNG, K. S.: Internet Addiction: The Emergence of a New Clinical Disorder. Internet Addiction: The Emergence of a New Clinical Disorder. In *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 2009, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 237-244. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.1998.1.237>>.

⁶⁴ KEFI, H., PEREZ, C.: *The Dark Side of Social Media: A Consumer Psychology Perspective*. United Kingdom : Taylor & Francis, 2018. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-7163-9_110217-1>.

⁶⁵ See: *INTERNET & SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA: MCAFFEE REPORT POST AUTHOR BY INDIAFACTS: WordPress*. 2021. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://indiafacts.in/internet-social-media-usage-among-youth-india-mcafee-report/>>.

⁶⁶ See: MATHUR, G.: The Art of Retention, Leveraging Social Media for Generation Y Retention. In *International Journal of Application or Innovation in Engineering & Management*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 99-108. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://www.ijaiem.org/Volume5Issue1/IJAIEM-2016-01-23-21.pdf>>.

⁶⁷ See: INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNANCE, POLICES & POLITICS & SOCIAL MEDIA MATTERS & YOUTH ONLINE LEARNING ORGANISATION: *Patterns Of Internet Usage Among Youths In India*. 2020. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://www.socialmediamatters.in/patterns-of-internet-usage-among-youths-in-india#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20data%20majority,OTT%20platforms%20other%20than%20YouTube>>.

⁶⁸ See: GAO, J. et al.: Mental Health Problems and Social Media Exposure During COVID-19 Outbreak. In *PLOS ONE*, 2020, Vol. 15, No. 4, p. 1-10. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0231924>>.

⁶⁹ CHETTY, P.: *The Growing Use of Social Media Networks Among Teenagers in India*. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<https://www.projectguru.in/the-growing-use-of-social-media-networks-among-teenagers-in-india/>>.

⁷⁰ EXELMANS, L., SCOTT, H.: *Social Media Use and Sleep Quality among Adults: The Role of Gender, Age and Social Media Checking Habit*. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/eqxdh>>.

Sometimes, when consumers feel that the source page platform, content, or influencer is found to be judgmental or if it is untrustworthy, the credibility of the site goes down leading to social media disengagement. The younger generation tends to embrace new technology, apps, or webpages when they are highly recommended by a peer group or social group. Countries such as India which are known for their cultural diversity, will tend to have a strong influence through referral groups where negative experience from a cohort will lead to disengagement. Young consumers become disengaged when a social media page experience is not appealing, navigation becomes difficult or when the information is outdated, and this may also differ across generations.

Second, an independent sample t-test has proven that irrespective of gender social media disengagement is the same. All humans are social animals and hardwired to match themselves with others through social media, regardless of whether they are male or female. In countries like India where gender disparity is high and when it comes to digital literacy, females participate equally to men, which is a welcoming factor where disengagement is the same across gender. The third finding states that there is no relationship between family type and social media disengagement. The family set-up in India irrespective of joint or nuclear and being dual-income parents, these generation consumers have more freedom in their usage of mobile phones where parents have less eyes on children may pave way for over usage of social sites.⁷¹ The current pandemic has provided more space for the usage of gadgets where they connect to social sites, equally with online classes.

Anova results state that there is a difference in social media disengagement and usage in different social sites among these generations and Instagram being highly engaged⁷² and LinkedIn least engaged. The attractive features of Instagram such as stories, live, IGTV and now reels have constantly encouraged consumers to engage with it and become a new edge in online marketing for international luxury brands to rare vintage finds. Hence this social site has put India as the leading country with 180 million Instagram users (Statista.com, 2021). The reason behind the disengagement with LinkedIn might be that it is meant for professional networking rather than socializing or entertaining and possibly more “to real and practical for the Gen Z and millennial audience”. Instagram encourages users to post pictures along with the content that promotes high engagement and maybe this method when replicated in LinkedIn may attract a higher audience who have previously shunned it. Florenthal (2015)⁷³, pointed out that ignorance among students about the LinkedIn network and the perception that it is purely meant for professional networking to be initiated after graduation might be the barriers among students on less usage of this site.

As these generations indulge in mindless scrolling on “Fear of Missing Out” (FOMO) leads to disengagement from social media. Being avid users, it is high time to increase awareness about safe, healthy internet usage and a psychiatrist from a leading chain of hospitals in India has stated that social media fatigue may also result in various health complications such as insomnia, relationship problems, anxiety issues, depression, and low academic performance. As they are born and raised in a high-speed connected world these generations are overloaded with

⁷¹ See: HUSSAIN, T., IMTIAZ, I., IQBAL, A.: Family Relations after the Emergence of Social Media: A Comparative Analysis of Single-Family and Joint Family Systems. In *Global Regional Review*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 544-551. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348035224_Family_Relations_after_the_Emergence_of_Social_Media_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Single-Family_and_Joint_Family_Systems>.

⁷² See: KAUR, K., KUMAR, P.: Social Media Usage in Indian Beauty and Wellness Industry: A Qualitative Study. In *The TQM Journal*, 2020, Vol. 33, No. 1, p. 17-32. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342478548_Social_media_usage_in_Indian_beauty_and_wellness_industry_a_qualitative_study>.

⁷³ See: FLORENTHAL, B.: Applying Uses and Gratifications Theory to Students' LinkedIn Usage. In *Young Consumers*, 2015, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 17-35. [online]. [2022-04-01]. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276172688_Applying_uses_and_gratifications_theory_to_students'_LinkedIn_usage>.

information, and they never know a world without social media. Thus, the study suggests that digital detoxification and social media usage in moderation might provide a better environment for users and for marketers when they declutter irrelevant posts, interactive and guiding⁷⁴ on their page and transparency in dealing with consumer data may reap long-term engagement with them.

5 Conclusion

Active usage of social media has already changed the way of marketing a virtual bazaar which may lead to more innovative business models. The study says that GenY & Z do not disengage with social media is an invite to marketing analysts to explore more in this area by creating a healthy cyberspace for profitable business. Understanding the reason for social media disengagement irrespective of platforms will foster long-lasting relationships in these platforms benefitting markets and consumers.

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